

Fairfield Presbyterian Church
Fairton, Cumberland County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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Fairfield Presbyterian Church
Fairton, Cumberland County, New Jersey

Owner: The Trustees of the Fairfield Presbyterian
Church

Date of Erection: 1780-1781

Architect:

Builder:

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: One with gallery

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - stone

Interior walls - plaster,
ceiling arch with boards
of varying width painted
white

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch

Historical Data:

The history of the Fairfield Presbyterian Church goes back to about the 1680's when a log meeting house was built beside the Cohansey by the settlers who came from Fairfield Connecticut and who brought their own minister with them. The town

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was variously known as "Fairfield" and "New England Town". Here the settlers from Greenwich and Bridge Town came to worship.

The second building for worship in this community was erected between 1713-15 about a mile east of the first building, and it was patterned after the style of New England. Fire destroyed this building, but the site is marked by a monument erected by the Presbytery. Around this old site is one of the oldest cemeteries in South Jersey with gravestones bearing the names of men outstanding in their day - Colonel Isaac Preston of the First Battalion Cumberland County, a hero of the Revolution; Colonel Asa Smith; Colonel James Ogden; Ephraim Bateman, who served in the House of Representatives; Moses Bateman, who served in the war; and Reverend Daniel Elmer, pastor of the church before the war and who joined the army and became a surgeon's mate.

In 1818 the lot upon which the Old Stone Church now stands was purchased, and in 1775-76 two hundred loads of stone and eight hundred feet of lumber were brought to the ground. War, however, interrupted the building of the church. The British seized the material and built a wharf along the Cohansey River. The building of the church was delayed until 1780. In May of that year the first stone was laid and in September the first service was held. This was during the pastorate of William Hollingshead.

The building is in excellent repair today. The exterior is of stone with wide entrance doors and paneled shutters. The interior is painted white, relieved only by the brown trim on the tops of the seat backs and the hand rail on stairways and the soft tones of the brick paved isle. The balcony extends along three sides of the building, and on

the fourth side is a high pulpit with a stairway on the right and a sound board overhead. The chimney starts from the floor in the very center of the building and is obviously out of place in the plan of the building. The coal stove is highly ornamented and bears the name of the maker, John I. Hess, upon it.

The collection boxes are unique. They have small oval holes in the top of each to make sure that the offerings once given could not be retrieved.

In front of the pulpit is a picture of Ethan Osborn and a frame copy of the Resolution drawn up by the members when they asked him to come and work among them. He died at the age of ninety-nine having served the congregation fifty-five years.

In 1850 the congregation transferred to a new building in Fairton, and since that time the Old Stone Church has been used only for special services.

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Interview with and records given by Reverend Clinton Cook, present pastor of the church at Fairton

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Approved:

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Rev. Jan. 26 '37 TTW